

Item Title: Appropriate \$189,319 of Building Permit Revenue in the General Fund and Establish 1.0 FTE for a Plans and Permit Technician and 2.0 FTEs for General Inspectors in the Planning, Development and Inspections Division of Community Services

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners appropriates \$189,319 of additional building permit revenue in the FY 2018 General Fund, and establishes 1.0 FTE for a Plans and Permit Technician position, and 2.0 FTEs for General Inspectors within the Planning, Development and Inspections Division.

Item Summary:

One of the primary functions of Planning, Development and Inspections (PDI) is to protect the public's health, safety, and welfare in the built environment by administering and enforcing the North Carolina Building Code as created by the International Code Council and adopted by the North Carolina Building Code Council.

This program is mandated by the State of North Carolina. All building, electrical, mechanical, and plumbing construction must be permitted and inspected. The North Carolina Building Code and North Carolina General Statutes regulate most functions of the inspections division. PDI is charged with permitting and inspections for: 1) the unincorporated area of Wake County; 2) the contracted Towns of Knightdale, Rolesville, Wendell and Zebulon; 3) Wake County Public School System construction and renovation projects in all municipal jurisdictions; 4) Wake County and Wake Technical Community College construction and renovation projects in all municipal jurisdictions except Fuquay-Varina; and 5) Raleigh-Durham International Airport and Research Triangle Park.

Since FY12, workload demands within the Planning, Development and Inspections Division have steadily increased. In FY17, the number of permits and inspections reached levels which have impacted the Division's ability to deliver services to the development community within expected timeframes. Community Services gauges the effectiveness of Wake County's permitting and inspections program through various performance measures. These methods have been in place since 2007 and are effective in evaluating the need for expansions and reductions in this work area.

Plans and Permit Technician

The effectiveness of this service is measured by: 1) maintaining turnaround time of three business days to finalize a permit once all department reviews are complete; and 2) the administration of a quality control program.

There are currently five Plans and Permit Technicians on the Plans and Permit's team - the last addition to this team was in FY15 by an increase of one FTE. These five employees need to maintain an average of 3.0 residential and/or commercial permits per staff per day to keep the turnaround time commitment of three business days to finalize a permit. This commitment is expected by the development community, which is comprised of homebuilders, engineers, surveyors, developers, etc.

The work load demands in recent months are significantly exceeding the maximum average of 3.5 residential and/or commercial permits per staff per day, which is not sustainable. The staff is now struggling with nearly 20% of all permits taking over ten days to finalize and deliver to the customer. Both Community Services and Environmental Services are now receiving complaints from customers about the excessive time that is currently needed to provide permitting services as the workload continues to trend upward.

This request is to add 1.0 FTE (Band 5) to the Plans and Permits team that will allow the team to maintain an average of 3.23 residential and/or commercial permits (below the 3.5 maximum average) per person per day.

The estimated cost of adding 1.0 FTE to the Plans and Permit's team in FY18 is \$38,678 - assuming a December 1, 2017 hiring date. The costs include salary and benefits for seven months, operating costs (salary/benefits, software licensing fees and supplies), and one-time charges (computer and phone). The full year operating cost for the position is \$60,836 and will be included in future operating budgets (beginning FY19 if approved).

General Inspector

The effectiveness of this service is measured by: 1) maintaining customer response of one business day to conduct a requested inspection and conducting plan reviews for contracted municipalities within desired response times (e.g. one day for residential renovations, three days for new residential, five days for commercial); and 2) the administration of a quality control program.

There are currently 17.9 Inspectors on the Area Inspections team. The last addition to this team was in FY15 by an increase of 2.0 FTEs. Area inspectors are expected to maintain an average of 12 inspections per day in order to maintain the one business day response time for requested inspections. Inspectors are now averaging 15 inspections per day, which impacts their ability to maintain the target of one business day response time for requested inspections and complete plan reviews for contracted municipalities. Currently, 91.5% of all inspections are completed within one business day and 84.3% of new residential plan reviews are performed within three business days (each below our 95% target). Delayed response times result in inspections and plan reviews being conducted further out, affecting our overall customer service.

This request is to add 2.0 FTEs (Band 7) to the Area Inspections team that will allow the team to maintain an average of 13.4 inspections per day per inspector; meet the one business day response time for requested inspections; and conduct residential renovation plan reviews within one business day, new residential plan reviews within three business days, and commercial plan reviews within five business days.

The estimated cost of adding 2.0 FTEs to the Area Inspections team in FY18 is \$150,641 - assuming a December 1, 2017 hiring date. The costs include salary and benefits for seven months, operating costs (salary/benefits, software licensing fees and supplies), and one-time charges (vehicle, computer and phone). The full year operating cost for the two positions is \$159,407 and will be included in future operating budgets (beginning FY19 if approved).

FTE Cost Summary

Cost Summary	FY18	FY19
<i>Plans & Permit Technician (1 FTE)</i>		
Ongoing (salary, benefits)	\$35,488	\$60,836
One-Time (Licensing, Computer)	\$3,190	-
<i>General Inspectors (2 FTE)</i>		
Ongoing (salary, benefits)	\$92,987	\$159,407
One-Time (Licensing, Computer, vehicle)	\$57,654	-
Totals	\$189,319	\$220,243

Revenue

As a result of the increased workload, revenue from permit fees is also up. Staff is recommending appropriating \$189,319 of additional building permit revenue in the FY 2018 General Fund to establish the three positions requested. The proposed increase in FY 2018 building permit revenue is sufficient to cover the projected costs of the new positions. This request will not require a change to building permit fees.

Staff will continue to evaluate and monitor workloads to determine if additional positions should be requested through the FY19 operating budget process.

Attachments:

1. Presentation
2. Budget Memo
3. Workload Data